

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method comprising
2 enabling a first party to a possible transaction to invoke an element of a user interface
3 to cause electronic mail invitations to be sent to selected individuals who will form a team
4 representing the first party in connection with the transaction.

1 2. The method of claim 1 also including enabling the first party to invoke an
2 element of a user interface to cause an electronic mail invitation to be sent to an administrator
3 representing a second party to the transaction.

1 3. The method of claim 2 also including limiting permissions of the
2 administrator with respect to interaction that will occur between the first party and the second
3 party in connection with the transaction.

1 4. The method of claim 2 also including enabling the administrator to invoke an
2 element of a user interface to invite additional individuals to form a team representing the
3 second party in connection with the transaction.

1 5. A method comprising
2 enabling a user to identify a stored template as an initial draft of the text of a contract
3 for use in connection with a possible transaction,

4 enabling two parties to modify the text of the contract as part of a negotiation with
5 respect to the transaction, and

6 enabling the two parties to assent to a final version of the text of the contract as
7 governing the transaction.

1 6. The method of claim 5 in which the template may be an empty contract, a
2 copy of an existing contract from another transaction that has been stored as a template.

1 7. The method of claim 5 in which the contract comprises a full-text prose
2 document organized in sections.

1 8. The method of claim 5 also including displaying to each of the parties any
2 selected modification of the contract.

1 9. The method of claim 5 also including embedding attributes in the text of the
2 agreement and enabling each of the parties to define global values for the attributes.

1 10. A method comprising
2 maintaining a draft text of a contract that represents a current state of a negotiation
3 between two parties with respect to a transaction, and
4 maintaining a control mechanism that gives only one of the parties at a time a right to
5 edit the draft text.

1 11. The method of claim 10 in which the control mechanism includes enabling a
2 party that has the right to edit to relinquish the right to the other party.

1 12. The method of claim 11 also including displaying to both parties the status of
2 the edit right.

1 13. The method of claim 10 in which at least one of the parties comprises a team
2 of individuals, and the control mechanism gives only one of the individuals at a time the right
3 to edit.

1 14. The method of claim 13 in which an individual who has the right to edit can
2 relinquish it to another individual on his team or to the other party.

1 15. The method of claim 14 in which both of the parties comprise teams of
2 individuals, and an individual who has the right to edit can relinquish the right to any other
3 individual on either of the teams.

1 16. A method comprising
2 enabling a party to a possible transaction to form a team of individuals to participate
3 in electronically negotiating terms of a contract with another party to the transaction,
4 identifying one of the individuals as an administrator of the team, and
5 enabling the administrator of the team to control the electronic participation of other
6 individuals on the team in the negotiating.

1 17. The method of claim 16 in which controlling the electronic participation
2 includes controlling the rights of the other individuals to view, edit, or approve the terms of
3 the contract.

1 18. The method of claim 17 in which controlling the electronic participation
2 includes controlling the rights of the other individuals to contribute electronic messages to
3 the negotiation.

1 19. The method of claim 16 in which information about the team is stored
2 electronically for later use in connection with another transaction.

1 20. The method of claim 16 in which the administrator controls the membership of the
2 team.

1 21. A method comprising
2 sending automatic electronic mail messages to parties engaged in an electronic
3 negotiation of an agreement in connection with a transaction, the electronic mail messages
4 providing notifications of state changes associated with the negotiation.

1 22. The method of claim 21 in which the state changes include changes to the
2 agreement made since the electronic mail recipient's last viewing of the agreement.

1 23. The method of claim 21 in which the state changes include the existence of
2 new posted messages with respect to the negotiation.

1 24. The method of claim 21 also including enabling an individual associated with
2 one of the parties to control the volume of the electronic messages sent to him.

1 25. The method of claim 21 in which the volume of messages is controlled based
2 on the type of state changes represented by the messages.

1 26. The method of claim 25 in which the type includes changes in the
2 composition of a team associated with one of the parties, changes in the text of the
3 agreement, the posting of messages, or changes in an approval status of the agreement.

1 27. An Internet website comprising
2 a database containing documents pertaining to possible transactions offered by
3 customers of the website,
4 an interface that permits separate websites to access descriptions of the possible
5 transactions and to direct interested users to the Internet website, and
6 a negotiation interface configured to allow the users to negotiate online to reach the
7 terms of a transaction with the customers that offered the transactions.
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